



State Senator

November 14, 2003

VALDE GARCIA

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Shiawassee-Livingston-Southern Ingham counties

Coffee Break News

MEGA Extended

This week the Senate helped ensure that Michigan will continue to be competitive in luring new businesses and convincing current businesses to expand their operations in the state. Reauthorization of the Michigan Economic Growth Authority Act was overwhelmingly approved Wednesday. It extends MEGA's Single Business Tax credit to Dec. 31, 2009, provides additional oversight tools and improves the credit-granting ability of the program. MEGA is one of the main programs in the nine-point Republican "Job Opportunities for Business Success" plan. The package now goes to the House of Representatives.

MIRT Legislation Introduced

Legislation outlawing the purchase, possession and use of traffic-signal controllers was introduced this week. The two-bill package makes it illegal for unauthorized persons to sell, purchase and use the devices known as Mobile Infrared Transmitters and provides strict penalties for offenders. Someone using a MIRT resulting in a crash causing death could face felony charges with up to 15 years in prison and a fine of \$25,000. The devices emit a beam to receivers installed at intersections and, when within a 1,500-foot range, change the light immediately from red to green.

Identity Theft Package Approved

The Judiciary Committee unanimously approved the main parts of the identity theft package this week, forwarding a major initiative from Senate Republicans. During committee hearings, victims told senators how they had their personal information taken and used to open fraudulent loan, credit card and cell phone accounts. In one man's case, he was left to pay back thousands of dollars in loans and still has problems with his credit cards despite how he proved conclusively years ago that he wasn't responsible for the charges. Other victims reported problems in getting police to investigate such crimes because existing state law doesn't make clear which police agencies have jurisdiction. The package, which includes two bills sponsored by Senator Garcia, now goes to the full Senate for consideration.

Jobs "Czars" Proposed

The Senate Economic Development, Small Business and Regulatory Reform Committee approved creating two "czars" positions within the Michigan Economic Development Corporation this week to focus on small-business start-ups and creating and retaining manufacturing jobs. The move comes at a time when 25 percent of the manufacturing jobs lost in the United States have come from Michigan. The positions are needed to ensure the regulatory and economic development arms of all state departments are doing what they can for the manufacturing industry as well as entrepreneurs. The bills now go before the full Senate.

Phone Cards Donated to Military

In a special ceremony this week at the Capitol, Senator Garcia along with other members of the state Legislature presented the Michigan National Guard and Army Reserve with 3,000 phone cards that will be distributed to military members and their families. The cards, donated by DTE Energy and Verizon, are worth 60 minutes of domestic long distance.

New Bill Encourages Farmers to Secure Anhydrous Ammonia Supplies

Michigan farmers who fertilize with anhydrous ammonia would be eligible for tax credits in exchange for putting in place certain security measures to prevent against theft, under a bill introduced by Senator Garcia Thursday.

Anhydrous ammonia, a nitrogen-based fertilizer product, is a key ingredient in the production of methamphetamine. The tax credit would begin in the 2004 tax year and could not exceed the farmer's tax liability.